

The COMPASS

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS



November, 1942



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Statement by President

Report on Study of Membership

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Outline for Employment Practices Inquiries

Volume XXIV

Number 1

Notes on the National Board Meeting

In addition to actions taken by the National Board at its meeting October 9, 10 and 11 which are described elsewhere, a number of other matters about program and plans for the year were taken up. While not proceeding at this time with full resumption of the former national committee program because of staff limitations, the Board did establish assignments and approve personnel for certain committees whose work is essential to the general operation and administration of the Association such as the Committee on Personnel Practices of the National Staff, the Financial Advisory Committee, the Committee on Employment Practices. Similar action was taken regarding the National Membership Committee to provide means for assisting with chapter consideration of the report on the special study and membership action on it. A standing Committee on By-laws has been set up which will be responsible for continuous review of by-law provisions and for consideration of Board actions which involve proposals for by-law changes, and an advisory committee of the Board on recruitment for professional education was established. It is expected that the full list of the committee personnel and assignments for 1942-43 will be made available in the next issue of THE COMPASS.

The Association now has its 90th chapter, the Mahoning Valley Chapter, covering a limited territory in eastern Ohio and centering in Youngstown. The granting of this request for chapter organization was one of the Executive Committee's actions subsequently approved by the Board.

As is noted by the president, the Board is developing its program plans leading to a Delegate Conference in May of 1943. It recognized that whether or not this plan will be possible depends primarily on how quickly and fully the program plans can get under way, particularly on the success in obtaining the special staff which has been authorized. It is also important at this time to plan Association conferences and meetings with a view to the most economical use of travel facilities.

The 1942 Committee on Elections submitted its final report at this Board meeting, describing the conduct of the 1942 election and proposing a number of changes in delegation of responsibilities, procedures and methods which were acted on by the Board. One of the recommendations approved involves the creation of a standing committee

to be responsible for conduct of the election. In addition the committee had drawn up a detailed over-all plan for conduct of Association elections which the Board approved for use as a working guide. Disposal of ballots and envelopes of the 1942 election was ordered.

On assignment from the Board, the Personnel Practices Committee of the National Staff drew up a classification plan for clerical members of the national staff, including a general statement regarding qualifications and examples of duties and salary ranges for each class. Favorable action was taken on the committee's recommendations and in addition a plan for staff salary increases within the established ranges, proposed also by the staff personnel committee, was adopted.

The Board approved action by the Executive Committee on a question raised by the 1942 Nominating Committee about the practice of certain chapters to circulate a recommended slate of candidates among other chapters after nominations by the Nominating Committee have been published. The Board's conclusion is that its position on the inappropriateness of election platforms (see Operating Policies, pages 19-20) covers the question about chapter slates, since the purpose of the latter would necessarily be based on the idea of platforms.

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Next Steps in the AASW

A letter to the membership from the president of the AASW, GRACE L. COYLE

THE new Board had its first meeting on October 9, 10 and 11, at which time it made plans which we believe the membership would wish to know of immediately. The minutes of the Board meeting will go as usual to the chapters but minutes all too often do not fully convey the living significance of an occasion. I am therefore taking this opportunity in the first COMPASS of the fall to give an informal report to the membership on the "state of the nation" and the plans which the Board has made for the next few months.

It is essential in the first place that the membership should recognize that we are at the moment facing serious, though we hope temporary, limitations. We have at present only one professional staff member who has been carrying on the basic administrative functions since last May. These were noted in the June COMPASS. There is, of course, very little opportunity for one person with this load to provide field service to chapters, to develop new program, or to do many of the things we can all think of as highly desirable.

The Association faces also certain problems of finance, for the most part perennial but more acute now in view of the program immobilization of the last two years. Facing these limitations realistically, the Board felt that it was essential to direct our attention not only to sound solutions to our internal problems, but also to the opportunities which lie before the professional association of social workers in a time like the present. In a period of new social alignments and of tremendous social changes, social institutions of all kinds are in the making. If we believe that adequate and competently manned social services must have an increasing part in the emerging period, it behoves us at this time to gird ourselves for intelligent and farsighted action. If we as social workers are not able to do this, we shall have little part in determining that future. Moreover, we may lose certain important gains of recent years. One of the instruments through which social workers can use their experience in the molding of the future should obviously be their own professional organization. The Board was conscious therefore as it began its deliberations not only of its responsibility to the membership to assist it to make more vital the internal life of the Association. It was also conscious of its responsibility as rep-

resenting the membership in a social scene demanding farsighted, courageous and imaginative social statesmanship.

In addition to certain somewhat routine matters of business, the Board had before it these major problems—the securing of a new executive secretary, the completed report of the special study of membership, undertaken for the Board by the National Membership Committee, and the question of program for the year 1942-1943.

In regard to the securing of the executive secretary, we can report to you now that the Board is moving as rapidly in that direction as circumstances permit. A very competent and reliable committee appointed by the previous Board has conducted a careful inquiry to secure a list of candidates on which the Board could act. The best methods for evaluating qualifications, adapted somewhat to our particular situation, have been used, and the Board is convinced that within the inevitable limits of human frailty it is moving as impartially and as intelligently as it can in this matter. We realize the membership is impatient with delay and we can assure you that no delays except those inherent in such a process will be allowed to intervene. We, too, are fully conscious of the urgency of having our new secretary on the job.

The National Membership Committee submitted its report on the special study of membership which the Board has been carrying on, as many of you know, for the last three years, under direction from the delegate conference. The Board adopted the report of the committee and copies have already gone to chapters for discussion. It will be voted on at the next delegate conference and we hope to have it thoroughly discussed in the chapters this winter. More details about the report are given elsewhere in this issue. I hope that chapters will try to plan immediately for thorough study and discussion of this material.

The third major question before the Board was the question of program for the coming year, in addition to work on issues in the membership study and the Board's recommendations on it. At this point the Board felt that it was essential that we get to work immediately on some of the important problems confronting social work in a period of war and the following period of reconstruc-

tion. We went back to the last program statement as adopted by the delegate conference in 1940. It was immediately clear that the Board would need to make some selection of priorities from among the many subjects included in such a statement of general program, especially in view of our present limited resources and also of new ways in which the problems are arising. We had before us also some recent proposals from chapters and we drew upon our own experience. Out of this discussion came further decisions for program for this year which we should like to report to you here.

As a major project for the next eight months we have determined upon a Commission on the Organization and Planning of Social Services in the War and Postwar Periods. Problems needing urgent attention involve overlapping and duplication of existing community social services, needs for social services which are untouched by present organizations, problems of financing both public and private services, drains on the supply of trained personnel caused by development of new agencies, assumption of the role of planning of social services in this country and abroad by individuals and groups outside the social work field, both now and for the post-war period, etc. The Board recognized not only the importance of attacking these problems now but also the particularly advantageous setting provided through the Association for this attack.

The commission would be organized in a way to best serve to draw together and focus the thinking of all of us on these crucial questions as to how social services should be planned and organized in the light of war changes and those changes already looming in the postwar period. The Board established the following statement of assignment for the commission:

To study problems of organization, structure and planning of social services and to develop recommended principles and methods which may be used as guides to effective and economical organization and administration of social work services locally and nationally. It would be expected that such principles would be pertinent to immediate developments abroad and also in connection with plans for social services after the war. In fulfilling this assignment the commission shall give attention to special problems arising from the war situation, those involved in the relationship of existing services to agencies, such as, the Army and Navy, the USO, Red Cross, means for planning the most effective use of social

work personnel and definition of the profession's relationship to the government and to other organizations with similar interests. Attention shall be given also to plans for administration of assistance abroad and problems regarding meeting of social service needs in this country both during and after the war period.

As a basis for formulation of principles and policies the commission shall review existing materials, consult with individuals and other organizations, such as government agencies, national functional organizations and other social work professional associations, and work with chapters and members in gathering, analyzing and utilizing data and experience pertinent to its assignment and in testing preliminary formulations.

The Board has authorized the employment of a temporary staff member to work on the project and provide staff service for the commission. The exact formulation of the aspects of the problem to be tackled and the way in which it can be tackled most effectively must be worked out in further detail. The extent to which we can make immediate headway will, of course, depend on the funds which will be available for this purpose and the securing of staff. The Board considered that the work of the commission during this program year would culminate in a delegate conference centered chiefly in discussion of this subject and held, if possible, in May of 1943. The relation of plans we develop to plans of the National Conference of Social Work and the transportation situation makes it necessary to leave such plans flexible at the present time, but as soon as they can be formulated chapters will be notified.

In addition to this commission and the completion of the membership study, the Board was concerned about one or two other issues on which we all need to work. One of the most insistent needs is that related to recruitment for professional service. At this time obviously the demand for trained social work personnel is increasing much more rapidly than the supply, and the lack of sufficient qualified persons is a serious threat to standards. Chapters were sent some material on this problem during the summer. We believe chapters have an opportunity and a responsibility to assist in locating new material for social work and in seeing that they are wisely directed to programs for professional education. Obviously other groups, national organizations such as the American Association of Schools of Social Work as well as local organizations, and councils of social

agencies, are concerned also, and the efforts of the national and the chapters need to be coordinated with them. We have set up an advisory committee on recruitment which will help in development of the national Association's role and in assisting chapters.

The Board felt too that there was need both as a special inquiry and as a never completed process, to review and examine social work practice itself, changes that have come about in the last several years, which would serve to clarify and deepen our understanding of practice and provide a picture of where we are as a profession. This was recognized as involving practice in group work and community organization as well as case work and the relations among them. Since this is a complex subject, the Board decided

to set up a small committee to work out a formulation on the scope and method for such a project and to ask the new executive secretary, when appointed, to regard its implementation as a major responsibility.

Other matters before the Board will be reported to you through the minutes and elsewhere in this COMPASS. We had, I believe, a constructive and on the whole hopeful discussion of the prospects for the Association. We must ask you to share with us the realization of our limitations at this time and to be patient if you do not see noticeable results in short order. We can assure you that within those limitations we will do all that we can to carry forward fruitfully the life of the Association.

Report on the Study of Membership

THE National Board has now approved and released the report on the study of membership which the National Membership Committee has been carrying on for the Board since 1939.¹ Copies of the full report have been distributed to chapters for study and discussion.² The Board has made definite plans to insure adequate time for membership consideration and informal interchange on this material. It has asked that after preliminary study chapters submit their comments and questions for consideration by the National Membership Committee and the Board prior to the period when proposals for formal action at a delegate conference will be decided on.

The report which the Board approved includes the general report of the National Membership Committee and also the full reports of the four subcommittees of the National Membership Committee which were set up to study the application of the present membership requirements to the fields of group work, public welfare, probation and

parole, and community organization. The National Membership Committee's report focuses on the work of these subcommittees, which as may be remembered, were set up at the direction of the Board in December 1939. Some of the other material that will be useful for study has to do with consideration of the use of written examinations and also unassembled examinations as methods of selection for AASW membership. Conclusions and recommendations on which the National Membership Committee requested Board action are given as approved by the Board.

In introducing its report the National Membership Committee notes briefly the nature and extent of the problem of membership in a professional organization:

In any professional association problems of membership are related to the development of its purposes and program. Membership standards should be among the instruments for the fulfilling of those purposes. Naturally in a new profession there will not be full agreement as to purposes nor as to the ways and means of attaining them. The National Membership Committee has been fully aware that around specific questions of membership focus general differences of opinion about the Association's function. In submitting this report the National Membership Committee does not hope to achieve complete agreement on the part of the entire membership. We have merely attempted to come to grips with a few of the pending issues and to make recommendations on them. On other problems there is much work to be done by future committees. Problems relating to membership should at all times be a vital part of the Association, to be studied, to be struggled with, and to be met bit by bit. The standards themselves will and should change as needs change, and we in the Association will take pride in them if they reflect increased competency and serve as an impetus to further growth.

¹ Members of the National Membership Committee for 1941-42 were: Lucia Clow, *chairman*, Milwaukee; Chester Bower, Cleveland; Geneva Feamon, Indianapolis; Raymond Kerger, Illinois; Ruth Lewis, St. Louis; Martha E. Phillips, Chicago; Grace Powers, Illinois; Lillian Proctor, Chicago; Wilma Walker, Chicago; Claudia Wannamaker, Chicago; Margaret Williamson, New Jersey, *chairman*, Subcommittee on Group Work; Genevieve Gabower, Washington, D. C., *chairman*, Subcommittee on Probation and Parole; Isabel Kennedy, Pittsburgh, *chairman*, Subcommittee on Community Organization; Anita Faatz, Baltimore, *chairman*, Subcommittee on Public Welfare.

² Copies are also available to any member upon request, at cost—50 cents.

At the same time that membership issues are broad, general, and interwoven with the entire purposes of the organization, they present also very specific and technical questions. If a standard is thought of as "that which serves as a test or measure, established by competent authority" it must be readily and economically administered and the criteria used must be relatively free from susceptibility to subjective bias in day-to-day application. Many solutions proposed for membership problems have in themselves been constructive and in keeping with the Association's purposes but have had to be discarded because of being administratively difficult. Much effort has also had to go into the interpretation of existing standards so that the staff might be guided by sound rulings in the handling of hundreds of applications. For example, in the clause, "two years employment in an approved agency," every noun and adjective must have its practical definition. The famous Section 6 clause, "The National Board may in exceptional circumstances elect to membership persons who do not meet the requirements specified above," is notorious for the time it has required of both national committees and staff with results never satisfactory to the membership.

A most significant step ahead for the Association, as a result of this study, has been

the development of a general guide for use in consideration of questions and proposals regarding membership policy and membership requirements. These criteria were formulated by the National Membership Committee before the reports of the subcommittees were received, to provide an "overall" and fair approach to study of any proposals which might be offered. They will have a continuing usefulness as well as immediate applicability.

The criteria were drawn from the resolution on purpose and membership policy adopted by the 1940 Delegate Conference, analysis of the Association's experience in administering Section 6 of the requirements and from the memorandum on the General Objectives and Utility of an Educational Standard for Membership Selection. The National Board has approved the criteria for its own use and believes they warrant serious and thorough consideration at this time by the whole Association.

Criteria for the Consideration of Membership Requirements and Methods of Admission

- I. Membership requirements should assist in the setting of standards through:
 - A. Recognizing professional education as the most reliable means of acquiring professional knowledge and skill.
 - B. Facilitating the selection of persons for social work positions who have the knowledge and skill necessary for efficient service.
 - C. Selecting personnel who are able and willing to carry out the organization's objectives.
 - D. Furnishing sound guidance to prospective social workers as to the equipment desirable for a social work career.
 - E. Identifying for the public, persons with special knowledge and experience as sources of reliable information and opinion on social work problems.
- II. All requirements should relate to the purposes and programs adopted by the membership of the Association. For that reason membership in the Association does not:
 - A. Constitute endorsement of individual social workers for particular jobs.
 - B. Serve for the personal benefit of individual social workers.
 - C. Imply lack of competence in the excluded or in their contributions to the field of social work.
- III. Membership requirements should be related to the program and needs of a general professional association.
 - A. The AASW is not a federation of independent specialties, but a unified association of professional social workers who believe that the same basic objectives, principles, concepts and knowledge are essential to proper performance of their differing tasks.
 - B. Requirements of the specialized fields are additional but not equivalent to general basic requirements.
 - C. General requirements are sound guidance to new specialties in indicating the common base upon which new functions might be developed and harmonized with existing fields.
- IV. Membership requirements should not be thought of as final or static. They will change as the Association's purposes clarify and develop. Therefore, what is acceptable as a requirement for 1942 will probably fall short of requirements a decade hence, and applicants seeking

membership in 1942 cannot expect to be considered by the criteria of a decade ago.

V. Membership requirements should be stated in definite, concrete terms suitable for efficient and uniform administration. Requirements should be such that:

- A. The National Membership Committee can set up interpretations and rulings which make possible delegation to the regular membership administration in the national office of responsibility for securing evidence and making decisions on all individual applications.
- B. Persons interested in future membership may know in advance what qualifications are necessary and how these may be obtained; also that they may have a reasonable opportunity to gauge their eligibility and be spared embarrassing doubt, delay and avoidable rejection.
- C. Chapters may gear their recruiting to possible eligibles, have a basis for clear explanations of requirements and be able to explain rejections.
- D. Practical and definite criteria may be

used and administration not be involved in uncertain, impractical, and time-consuming experimentation by committees whose meetings must be costly and inadequate in frequency.

Experience has shown the impracticability of undeveloped criteria such as "employment in an approved agency"; "acceptable experience in a social work position"; "written evidences" of professional competence (such as articles, reports, etc.); "chapter recommendation and references."

- E. Chapters are not involved in securing evidence and determining opinions on technical eligibility.

This involves them in conflicts within their own membership and in conflicts between "fields", and also results in delays and evasions prejudicial to good will and tending to over-emphasize certification to the detriment of interest in Association purposes and program.

- F. Persons in primary jobs possessing qualifications may have as good an opportunity for admission as those in prominent positions.

Nominative Districts for 1942-43

THE following nominative districts for the Association were adopted by the National Board for the year 1942-43. Membership figures given are those determined at the time of the last official membership count in October 1941.

There has been some evidence that the nominative district plan is not clearly understood and discussion in the Board brought out further the need to reiterate the basis on which the present nominative district plan was set up and adopted by the 1939 Delegate Conference. The basic purposes of the plan were to insure that the Board membership would be characterized by a wide geographic spread and to formalize a method by which chapter suggestions for candidates would be submitted for consideration by the Nominating Committee. The main consideration in determining the plan was, therefore, to apportion the membership as equitably as possible into nine districts rather than to set up lines for regional groups with homogeneous interests and means for working together closely on Association matters. It has been recognized that while some of the present nominative districts might be of that sort there were undoubtedly many which would not and could not be, and that should the district plan be used for purposes other than those indicated it would need to be revised. It should be noted further that the plan as originally adopted specifically indicated that members of the Board from nominative districts are in no sense district delegates but, like members at large, carry responsibilities for representing the total membership of the Association in promoting their common interests and aims.

1. PACIFIC AND MOUNTAIN (1342 members)	
Chapters	
Arizona State	18
California	
California East Bay	90
Los Angeles County	433
Sacramento	47
San Diego	42
San Francisco	196

California Tri County	21
Hawaii	65
Montana State	16
Oregon State	95
Utah State	67
Inland Empire	30
Pierce County	23
Puget Sound	125
Non Chapter Territory	
California State Council	15

Idaho	7	Columbus	93
Nevada	2	Dayton	39
Wyoming	3	Toledo	62
Washington	47	Mahoning Valley	15
2. SOUTHWEST AND GULF (1126 members)		Non Chapter Territory	
Chapters		Michigan State Council	49
Arkansas	30	Ohio State Council	36
Louisiana			
Louisiana	100		
New Orleans	169		
Missouri			
Central Missouri	63		
Kansas City	109		
St. Louis	335		
Oklahoma State	74		
Texas			
North Texas	53		
South Texas	59		
Southeast Texas	70		
Mississippi	25		
Non Chapter Territory			
Missouri	15		
New Mexico	14		
Texas	10		
3. NORTH CENTRAL WEST (1004 members)			
Chapters			
Colorado			
Colorado Springs	9		
Denver	148		
Iowa State	90		
Kansas			
Topeka	32		
Wichita	23		
Minnesota			
Arrowhead	31		
Twin City	300		
Nebraska State	104		
North Dakota State	22		
South Dakota State	17		
Wisconsin			
Dane County	35		
Milwaukee	128		
Non Chapter Territory			
Colorado	5		
Kansas	13		
Minnesota	14		
Wisconsin	33		
4. WEST CENTRAL (1175 members)			
Chapters			
Illinois			
Chicago	847		
Illinois	133		
Indiana			
Indianapolis	146		
St. Joseph Valley	24		
Non Chapter Territory			
Indiana	25		
5. EAST CENTRAL (1220 members)			
Chapters			
Michigan			
Detroit	275		
Grand Rapids	19		
Lansing	32		
Washtenaw County	26		
Ohio			
Akron	34		
Cincinnati	161		
Cleveland	379		
6. SOUTH CENTRAL AND ATLANTIC (1467 members)			
Chapters			
Alabama State	62		
Washington, D. C.	425		
Florida State	72		
Georgia State	114		
Kentucky State	114		
Maryland State	190		
North Carolina State	119		
Puerto Rico	21		
South Carolina State	51		
Tennessee			
Eastern Tennessee	17		
Memphis	33		
Nashville	31		
Virginia			
Lynchburg, Roanoke	29		
Richmond	146		
Non Chapter Territory			
Tennessee	2		
Virginia	41		
7. MIDDLE ATLANTIC (1157 members)			
Chapters			
Delaware State	37		
New Jersey State	246		
Pennsylvania			
Erie	30		
Harrisburg	72		
Lehigh Valley	24		
Northeastern Penna.	57		
Philadelphia	325		
Pittsburgh	303		
Reading	10		
Non Chapter Territory			
Pennsylvania Division	22		
West Virginia	31		
8. NEW YORK CITY & WESTCHESTER COUNTY (1154 members)			
Chapters			
New York City	1051		
Westchester	103		
9. NEW ENGLAND AND NEW YORK STATE (1364 members)			
Chapters			
Connecticut State	271		
Maine State	28		
Massachusetts			
Boston	313		
Southeastern Mass.	29		
Western Mass.	43		
Worcester	49		
New York (Upstate)			
Buffalo	142		
Fort Orange	67		
Hudson Valley	30		
Rochester	125		
Southern Tier	27		
Syracuse	54		
Rhode Island State			
Non Chapter Territory			
New Hampshire	14		
New York Council	51		
Vermont	10		

The Use of Case Records

A Preliminary Report to the Philadelphia Chapter by the Chapter's Committee on the Use of Case Records

The Philadelphia Chapter has for some time been interested in study and clarification of questions regarding confidential communications in social work practice and about the confidential nature of social case records. Some of its work was published in the May 1939 COMPASS—"The Protection of Case Material." Further work was undertaken partly in response to a specific situation in one social agency in which a worker was under legal pressure to reveal material which she considered confidential, and also developed from the general situation facing all agencies in a country at war.

This report, submitted for consideration by the chapter executive committee and chapter as a whole, but not yet acted on, is offered here as informal working material which may be helpful to other chapters and members concerned with the general subject as well as with some of the acute questions arising in relation to it because of wartime pressures and needs. Dorothy Hankins is chairman of this committee, and the other members are: Mildred Frank, Mary Hussie, John Joyce, Mary Samson.

In introducing its report, the committee indicates that it has based its study primarily on materials available through the experiences of its members and other individuals with agency situations rather than undertaking a more formal inquiry. The committee met once with a lawyer to obtain his attitude toward some of the points the committee was interested in. It also had some material on the legal status of case records in public agencies and was in correspondence with the Washington, D. C., Chapter, which has been undertaking similar study.

THE result of our work so far lies primarily in our recognition and identification of the areas in which the problems lie, the issues that are at stake. We have a few specific recommendations to make in connection with certain problems, but we realize there are no simple answers to most of the problems which we have recognized.

First of all, there is great difference of opinion within the profession itself concerning the nature and use of case material and this constitutes our first difficulty. Then there is the problem of the legal status of case information in the possession of social workers. These are two different matters, but the lack of clarity and agreement within the profession makes more difficult the solution of the second problem, which is complicated enough in its own right. Therefore, as a starting point we attempted to examine the relationship between agency and agency in this matter of passing on information about clients known to one or both of them. It seemed all the more important because, as we went over situations in our own agencies, and discussed experiences of other agencies, we found that the illustrations of difficulty given grew more often out of the requests of one social agency to another than out of the requests of other institutions or individuals to an agency.

In the past it has been rather generally assumed that all social agencies should share with other social agencies their information and opinions about clients whenever requested to do so. There are doubtless many factors in this assumption, some of them sound, and some of them less so. The belief that social workers know best and must pool their information in order to plan well for individuals or protect society from them, the genuine desire that various agencies not be working at cross purposes to the detriment of individual and society, the equally genuine desire to understand an individual and his situation as thoroughly as possible, even certain conceptions of "professional courtesy," have no doubt played their parts at different times in the persistence of this assumption.

Although there is this assumption we all know that at times social workers have had considerable doubt about passing on information to agencies whose workers are inexperienced, untrained, or who do not have standards similar to their own. One result is that considerable agency time goes into the writing of summaries intended to give as little information as possible; sometimes workers seek permission to read another agency's record on a client known to both agencies, to know everything that the other agency knows about him, as synonymous with

professional acceptance of themselves and their agency. Where this is so, other values tend to get lost in the shuffle.

Many of our points of discussion concerning inter-agency relationships and the giving of information, proved, naturally, to deal with problems which are under consideration by social service exchanges. Since this is so it is worthwhile to quote here from the Handbook on Social Service Exchange published by the National Social Service Exchange Committee (May 1940). Under "Criteria of Use" it is stated:

The confidential nature of the social service exchange cannot be overemphasized. The governing body of the exchange should draft minimum standards for use of its service to which policies member agencies agree, before becoming users of the service. There are two basic guiding principles involved:

1. Only those agencies should use it that have as their object the enhancement of the personal welfare of the client and his family.

2. Of these agencies, only those that can and will make an intelligent use of this tool of cooperation among agencies should be eligible to participate (p. 5).

Membership in the exchange should be entered into only when agency and exchange are in agreement as to confidential use of the service (p. 6).

The policy of refusing service to certain agencies who can only be considered "borderline" by twisting "enhancement of the personal welfare of the client" out of its real meaning has been followed by exchanges for many years and is sound. Use of the exchange should be refused to business credit bureaus, public legal prosecution services, police officers and detectives, lawyers, insurance companies, business firms, and any individual (p. 7).

In going through the digest prepared by the Washington, D. C., Chapter, we found that there is considerable difference of opinion among social workers on such questions as: Should a case ever be registered in social service exchange without the previous knowledge of the client? Is it permissible to give information about a client to another social agency without his knowledge and consent? To other people or organizations in the community? Is it permissible to visit other people in the community, such as relatives, without the knowledge of the client, or in opposition to his wishes, "for his own good?" Should one ever mislead a client as to the identity of one's agency when the object again is "his own good?"

For the most part these questions have been discussed interestingly from the point of view of ethics but this committee is of the opinion that most of them are questions of skill as well, and that in individual situations the skilled worker will almost always find the answer in her skill without its becoming an

ethical problem. Occasionally of course one sees behavior in this general area which has almost exclusively ethical implications. For example, this committee would see it as unethical for a social worker to clear identifying material about a prospective maid through the social service exchange.¹ There is no question of skill involved here, but rather the use for personal purposes of resources that are accessible to the worker only in her professional capacity. On the other hand, to conceal from the client the identity of one's agency may be unethical but first and foremost, it is unskillful social work. It is not enough that a client or a family of clients have needs, and an agency have services intended to meet those needs. The two must be brought together. The use that an individual can make of the services or resources of an agency depends in large part upon the relationship between the individual and the worker who represents the agency. Where the basis for the relationship is a false one due to the agency worker, there is little hope for ultimate help to the individual. To mislead a client "for his own good" therefore may be expedient but it is not farsighted. In short it is incompetent social work. Members of this committee had not met, nor were we able to imagine, any situations which would be exceptions.

In many phases of a consideration of the use of case records, skill and ethics are found inextricably mixed. The greater the skill in administration, supervision, and case or group practice, the less opportunity for confidential material to be exposed unnecessarily. Also the greater the skill in carrying out the job of one's own agency, the less often one will need to fall back on another agency's material in order to make a wise decision (e.g., a child placing agency may want certain information from a family agency or child guidance clinic but will usually have means of knowing through its own dealings with a client and her situation whether or not to accept her as a foster mother, or if she requests it, whether or not a sound basis can be worked out for accepting her children for placement). This is not to minimize the value of factual information which another agency may be able to supply and which may be essential to an understanding of a client or a situation, but the point should be made that such information can never be a substitute for skill in doing one's own job.

In a recent article, "Reintegrating Our

¹ See "Tentative Criteria of Professional Conduct," THE COMPASS, August, 1941. P. 4.

A Chapter Outline of Steps in Employment Practices Inquiries

THE following statement of grievance procedure has been adopted by the New York City Chapter's Executive Committee. It is for the use of the chapter grievance committee and of persons who request the chapter to make an inquiry. This clarification of procedures came about through the work this past year of the chapter's grievance committee to which appeals were referred for study. In the course of applying the official procedures adopted by the 1941 Delegate Conference (see COMPASS, June-July 1941, page 34) the committee encountered a number of questions about the procedures which led to definition in more detail of the steps the chapter will use in the future. Further questions about the formal procedures which it is believed need study and clarification by the Association as a whole, have been submitted to the national Association for consideration. These relate to the chapter's and also the national's part in this important Association responsibility.

I. Procedure for Initiating an Appeal.

A. Criteria.

1. An appeal for inquiry must involve a person, or persons, employed in a social work position; membership in the AASW is not a factor in acceptance of an appeal for inquiry.
2. The appeal must be brought by the individual or group of individuals involved.
3. The grievance must involve an alleged violation of AASW employment practice standards—i.e. the national Statement About Standard Employment Practices in Social Work or the chapter Recommendations on Employment Practices for New York City Social Agencies.
4. The alleged violation must relate to procedure in administering employment practices; failure of an agency to meet for the entire staff the standards set by AASW as desirable practices does not fall within the scope of grievance procedure.
5. The appellant must have initiated whatever appeals machinery is available within the agency.
6. The request for inquiry must be stated in writing and must include all the facts which seem relevant to the appellant. Alleged violations must be cited and a statement as to any other intra or extra agency machinery instituted on the appellant's behalf must be included.
7. Adequate time must be allowed for the committee to gather facts and make its report to the Executive Committee of the Chapter.

8. Before an appeal is accepted for inquiry, the person or persons appealing to the AASW must agree to keep confidential all material and information brought out during the course of the inquiry. He must further agree to release of the report if the Chapter Executive Committee wishes to make such release, and not to release the report himself unless the Executive Committee approves.

B. Method.

1. The chairman of the chapter Grievance Committee or the Executive Secretary of the Chapter may be consulted as to scope or procedure prior to presentation of a formal appeal to the chapter committee.
2. An outline of AASW grievance procedure is given to each appellant prior to or at the time of filing of the request for inquiry.
3. A grievance is presented initially to the chapter Grievance Committee, which is duly constituted each year by the elected Executive Committee.

II. Role of Chapter Grievance Committee.

- A. Decision to accept for study, or to reject.
 1. The Grievance Committee considers whether the request for inquiry falls within chapter and national criteria for acceptance. The committee may seek information in addition to that presented by the appellant in making the decision.
 2. If the committee decides against acceptance, the appellant is so

notified in writing and the reasons given.

If the appellant disagrees with this decision, he may appeal to the Chapter Executive Committee which may either uphold the Grievance Committee's decision or refer the request back to it for reconsideration. If the Executive Committee upholds a decision to reject and the appellant is not satisfied with this decision, he may then present his request to the national Committee on Employment Practices.

B. Procedure in Making an Inquiry.

1. Before finally accepting an appeal for inquiry the Grievance Committee obtains an agreement, in writing, from the person or persons appealing, to the confidential restrictions mentioned above (I.A.8.), and shall itself agree to the same restrictions.
2. The national Committee on Employment Practices is notified that the request has been accepted for study and it, in turn, notifies the national functional agency with which the local agency is affiliated (e.g. FWAA, CWL).
3. The Grievance Committee notifies the agency involved, and tells it of the agreement to keep the material confidential.
4. The committee proceeds to gather the facts from both parties through correspondence, conference, interview, or whatever methods seem appropriate.
5. The committee's report includes a statement of the facts, a discussion of the issues involved, and the committee's conclusions and recommendations.
6. The chapter Executive Committee, to which the report is made, may amend the report before taking final action.
The Executive Committee decides on the content of the report which is given to each of the parties involved and on any other use that is to be made of the report.
7. A copy of the full report as approved by the Executive Committee

is sent to the national Committee on Employment Practices with a statement of what use is being made of it.

III. Appeal to the National Committee on Employment Practices.

If the Chapter declines to accept an appeal for study, or if after completion of the inquiry either party is dissatisfied with the Chapter's report, appeal may be made to the national Committee on Employment Practices.

The procedure of the national committee is similar to that of the chapter committee as to notification, confidential restrictions, etc. Publication of a report is made only upon recommendation of the national committee and approval by the National Board.

Civilian Assistance Related To Wartime Needs

(Notes on a talk by Jane M. Hoey, summarized by Martha Perry, Executive Secretary of the New York City Chapter)

In a challenging address to the New York City Chapter at its first meeting of the year on October 19, Jane M. Hoey, Director of the Bureau of Public Assistance of the Social Security Board urged that social workers speak out firmly against undesirable developments in the rapidly changing social work scene, such as unnecessary disruption of family life, discrimination in employment against minority groups, the handicapped, and older men and women. Also social workers must find new ways to participate in programs where their experience is needed.

Miss Hoey pointed out that the function of the public assistance agency is changing. We must be ready immediately to plan for much more flexible programs. Public assistance will continue to serve as an under-pinning for the social insurances, to cover an interim period, to provide supplementation when needed. But as the social insurances are extended to cover at present uncovered employees, to include health insurance, and to provide unemployment compensation for dependents, public assistance as we have known it will be required on a continuing basis for an increasingly limited group. At

the same time the public assistance agency will render new kinds of services to groups of the population not heretofore reached. It must be equipped to serve anyone in the community who needs help of any kind, not limited to financial assistance.

Elaborating on recent trends in public assistance programs resulting from the war, Miss Hoey cited the use of the Social Security Board staff by the military authorities and the War Relocation Authority in the west coast evacuation, financial assistance and other services to repatriates of Europe and Asia through the Bureau of Public Assistance and medical care through the U. S. Public Health Service, as well as to evacuees of Alaska and Hawaii, dependents of civilians killed, injured, missing or captured, and civilian defense workers in protective services who are injured and the dependents of those killed while on official duty. This assistance has been made possible by a five million dollar allocation from the President's emergency fund pending Congressional legislation.

In emergency programs like these, past emphasis on eligibility shifts to emphasis on meeting new needs promptly, needs of a very different group of the population than previously served by public assistance programs. There must be a greatly increased emphasis on the service aspects of assistance programs. Social workers must be alert to these new needs and be flexible in utilizing their experience to meet unusual situations.

In discussing new areas of service for social work Miss Hoey mentioned the field of recruitment of man power. Shall the United States Employment Service develop a separate staff equipped to deal with the manifold welfare problems in recruitment and placement, and especially of workers new in the labor field, or transfer of workers and their families from one part of the country to another, or is it sounder to develop referral services in the United States Employment Service staffed by liaison representatives of the welfare agencies who would use instead the agency resources which already exist? Where and how can social workers serve effectively with the armed forces and with the Office of Civilian Defense? What expanded social services must be made available to men in the armed forces and their dependents?

Changes must occur in social work procedures and philosophy as emergency war needs arise and as social workers prepare to

meet them: simplification of forms and records; assistance sufficient in amount to keep up morale and production; new forms of assistance, money grants or "advances" for transportation, minor damage to houses, and other purposes hitherto frequently excluded from public assistance budgets.

The shortage of trained social work personnel is becoming increasingly serious. Private and public agencies must plan jointly for division of work but with clear understanding of the responsibilities of each. Social work students to meet the need for trained personnel must be recruited in competition with more obviously war-related activities at better pay. Increased scholarships would help. So far the federal government has not granted money for this purpose; perhaps local war chests could be convinced of the importance of allocating some money for this purpose. All other possible sources of funds for training purposes must be tapped. Workers with training must be promoted into supervisory positions and more intensive supervision must be given to new untrained staff.

These problems and questions reveal the urgent need for coordinated planning of social services both locally and nationally. The primary job in each community is to build up machinery for determining what is happening to people, what social problems there are, which resources and services it needs and how to use them effectively. We need to think about what the best channel would be for this planning and integration. It must be broader in scope than the present function of the council of social agencies. This is a job for social workers and lay people together. The planning must cover the relationship of all agencies and all services in a community, those under commercial as well as those under public and private social work auspices.

To be effective on the old as well as the new fronts social workers must establish co-operative relations with all types of organizations and groups in the community so that the services of their agencies may be utilized to the maximum. We must sell ourselves and what we have to offer. Partly because we have been servicing an almost exclusively "relief" group, we have not interpreted effectively to the community the services that might be available to all groups. We are now faced with a new challenge and a new opportunity. The potential field of social work has broadened enormously. Can we take advantage of it?

THE USE OF CASE RECORDS

(Continued from page 10)

Concepts of Privileged Communications,"² A. Delafield Smith makes the point that originally the privileged nature of certain communications was recognized by the law as a privilege, and therefore protection, of the person to whom the communication was made. It was against the "honor" of a gentleman to repeat in court anything that had been told to him privately and the court accepted that code. Only gradually did this privilege come to be taken as a protection of the communicating person and Mr. Smith contends that we need to think now of both the person giving and the person receiving information. In other words, we need to think of the relationship between them. It is another area in which ethics and skill are met together. If a worker is made uncomfortable in her feelings toward her clients because of the necessity for passing on information about them to others, against her own ethical standards, her relationship to them suffers and she inevitably becomes less skillful in helping.³

In order to protect the welfare of the client primarily, but also the worker and the community (through the best use of time, resources, etc.) we make the following suggestions relative to use of case records within the profession. None of them is new; on the contrary they have been said until they sound trite, but judging by the committee's experience in study, they are not yet put into practice by all social agencies and workers.

1. In general, no agency should pass information on to another by letting a worker from the second agency read its record. As a corollary, except under rare circumstances, no agency should ask to be allowed to read a particular record of another agency.

2. After a case has been queried, routine requests for summaries should never be sent to other agencies. The other side of this is that if such requests are received they should not be answered routinely but rather an at-

² *Social Service Review*, Vol. XVI, No. 2, June 1942, pp. 191-211.

³ "The law of privilege recognizes the essential identification of interest between the professional person and the client. You cannot function well in this relationship as long as you have reservations about placing yourself on the plane of the individual client, or fail to adopt his problem as your own, or, while seeking to supplement and strengthen his purposes, his knowledge, his purview, and his will, fail to observe conscientiously the rule that the relationship does not make you a dictator of the cause or leave you free to disclose a confidence, the reposal of which was justifiable under all the circumstances." *Ibid.*, p. 199.

tempt should be made to find out what the other agency wants to know and why.

3. A worker should try to be clear in her mind as to why she is requesting information from another agency. She should make her request as specific as possible and this request should grow legitimately out of the business that she and the client have together.

4. Anyone giving information should confine himself in so far as possible to what is relevant. Information which comes from one agency should seldom be passed on to another agency. Rather the second agency should be referred to the first.

5. Social workers should be more careful than they are about where they "talk shop." We are apt to be particularly careless among our friends and in public eating places. More often than we realize we pass on names and other identifying data, but even if the person who overhears does not recognize the particular situation under discussion, his confidence in the ethics of social workers may be undermined. Needless to say, lack of confidence in the social worker on the part of the public and of future clients, makes it difficult to be of service.⁴

Nothing that has been said so far should be interpreted as limiting case conferences, research, publication (provided case material is sufficiently disguised) or even visits of a worker to agencies other than her own for purposes of study involving the reading of records, provided such a visit is acceptable to the agency and has been responsibly worked out between visitor and agency.

Though occasionally workers appear to feel free to discuss clients and their affairs with almost anyone, some question our right to consider our relationship to a client confidential as long as we keep records, discuss the situation with other members of our staff, register and are willing to give any reports at all to other agencies. It is suggested that we tell a client in the very beginning that we keep records, register only if we get his consent, etc. As the members of this committee attempted to picture the giving of this information at the outset to a person arriving for the first time at an agency because he needs assistance in some difficulty, we could see it as quite ethical but not at all helpful. On the contrary, it would surely

⁴ Discussion of cases in public places "denotes a lack of respect for the confidential nature of the client's relationship with the agency and must certainly raise questions . . . about the attitudes of workers toward people getting help." Ida Goldberg. "The Confidential Relationship in Public Administration." *Social Work Today*, Vol. VII, No. 9, June-July 1941.

seem beside the point and possibly most rebuffing to the troubled client. Again it is a question of skill as well as of ethics. Moreover, we conclude that the difficulty in this matter in part grows out of difficulty in accepting the essential dual role. Social workers are representatives of society as well as of their agencies and the individual client. If social workers are genuinely convinced that a discriminating, responsible use of records and a social service exchange are essential to the best service for the majority of clients and for community economy, then there would seem to be no valid reason why they should put this decision upon the client, instead of letting the agency and worker carry the responsibility. This responsibility does seem to belong to them rather than to the client. Needless to say the exchange, and the practice of keeping records should not be concealed from the community at large, and a worker should be ready at all times to discuss these matters realistically with individual clients who raise questions about them.

So far there have been several references to the privileged nature of certain communications. In the writings in this field Wigmore is most frequently quoted. In Vol. 5, Sec. 2285 of his work on Evidence (second edition) he maintains that four elements should be present to sustain the privilege of communications:

1. The communications must originate in a confidence that they will not be disclosed.
2. This element of confidentiality must be essential to the full and satisfactory maintenance of the relation between the parties.
3. The relation must be one which in the opinion of the community ought to be sedulously fostered.
4. The injury that would inure to the relation by the disclosure of the communications must be greater than the benefit thereby gained for the correct disposal of litigation.

It is with points three and four that social work has the greatest difficulty as it attempts to establish a sound legal basis for protection of case records. For the most part the community accepts that the relationship between lawyer and client, doctor and patient, priest and confessor are ones that "ought to be sedulously fostered." It is less certain about the relationship between social worker and client. The problem is made more difficult by the fact that the line between lawyers and non-lawyers is very clear, between doctor and non-doctor, but where can the public, and eventually the law, draw the line between who is a social worker and who is not? The legal situation would be more clear if we had some sort of certification or licensing of social workers and such licensing

would no doubt help to effect a speedier acceptance by the public of social work as a profession.

Licensing, however, has its own problems, as the AASW well knows. Even now a comparatively small percentage of social workers have had full training at a professional school of social work. We are building up a body of experience with examinations but knowledge alone does not fit a person to practice social work, and adequate means of testing for skill have not yet been devised. Experiments are being made and it is important for our Association to continue to consider the problems involved. Because public agencies are recognized as truly agencies of the community, their objectives defined by law, it has been possible in recent years to make more progress in the recognition of the privileged nature of communications in the public than the private field. The opposite side of the picture is that the public in its role of taxpayer is inclined to think that it has a right to know all about everything it pays its money for, and thinks that one way to insure that recipients of a service do not take advantage of the taxpayer is to allow him no privacy. "Not everyone accepts the fact that skilled, scientific and thoroughly impartial administration plus, let us say, a little self-discipline is, and of right ought to be regarded as a complete substitute for such restraints as may arise from fear of the public stocks."⁵

Point four, "The injury that would inure to the relation by the disclosure of the communications must be greater than the benefit thereby gained for the correct disposal of litigation," raises the old question of the individual versus the community. This committee doubts that there are many situations where the question of confidentiality is raised, that involve a fundamental conflict in the interests of the two. We are agreed that in time of war, social agencies have a responsibility for passing on to proper authorities any knowledge of subversive activities which they may conceivably acquire and we do not question the right of certain government agencies (F.B.I., Navy Intelligence, etc.) to ask information from social agencies. However, we do think that they should be expected to give adequate reason for asking for information and also to be specific about what it is essential for them to know.

The law expects a lawyer to pass on information about a prospective murder even if the information comes from a client; on

⁵ A. Delafield Smith, *loc. cit.*, p. 102.

the other hand under many circumstances he is not held responsible for informing about various crimes that have been committed in the past. At one point in our discussion a lawyer tentatively put forth the theory that since a social worker is a representative of society, she should be particularly accountable for reporting any transgression of society's legal rules, certainly much more responsible than any individual lawyer who is only his own and his client's representative. The committee disagreed with this point of view. The individual lawyer can usually do little to help the client refrain from future crimes whereas the social worker through her agency is often able to render a service to the client which makes further transgressions unnecessary, and in doing so she is rendering a service to the individual and to society which may be much more valuable than a report about an old transgression.

An illustrative situation discussed was one in which it became known to a case worker that a mother of two small children who were temporarily in the care of another agency, was without a place to live and was spending her nights in a publicly owned building. She was probably doing no serious harm to the building but her entry was illegal and she was using gas, water and electricity. We were agreed that if this knowledge had come to us as individual citizens we would have reported it. We were equally unanimous that if it had come to us as case workers, under the circumstances described, we would not have done so, for this would have destroyed the mother's growing confidence in the agency. Because of her confidence she was able to work out plans for more permanent care of the children, was eventually able to help with plans for psychiatric treatment for the one who was a serious personality and behavior problem. Now, several years later, the mother is still an unstable person but no charge upon the community, and the children are normal, well developing youngsters.

Out of the discussion the lawyer who met with the committee came to a new conclusion as follows: Our social institutions do not work perfectly. It is because of this that society has set up social agencies. If these agencies should put the rules and regulations of other institutions ahead of everything else, they could not serve the purposes for which they were called into being and thus they would fail not only individuals but society as well. The committee was in agree-

ment with this and with the lawyer's further observation that this responsibility is a heavy one which calls for great professional judgment and skill as well as for knowledge.

It will doubtless be many years before the legal status of case records is clearly defined and the social worker-client relationship generally accepted as a professional one. In the meantime it is well for individual social workers to take care that they do not heedlessly violate the confidences of their clients, and for agencies to have as thoughtful and clearly defined a policy as possible relative to the giving of information. We should be prepared frequently to reexamine our practice in this area, as in others. Thus, we assist in the development of the profession together with the present and ultimate good of our clients. In closing we wish to emphasize again that professional judgment and skill as well as personal and professional ethics are involved in the handling of each situation. Moreover the greater the seeming conflict between the claims of the individual and of society, the greater the demand upon professional skill.

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